CHAPTER 1 – SUMMARY

This nonproject EIS addresses the environmental effects of alternatives to remove and/or reconstruct Piers 62/63, make improvements to Waterfront Park, and enhance aquatic habitat in the Seattle Central Waterfront area. This EIS was prepared in accordance with the Washington State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) (Washington Administrative Code 173-11) and the City of Seattle's (City's) SEPA Ordinance (Seattle Municipal Code 25.05, Environmental Policies and Procedures).

This chapter summarizes the background of the project, the proposed action, its objectives, the alternatives considered, and their probable environmental effects, including significant unavoidable adverse impacts. Mitigation measures that could be used to avoid, minimize, or compensate for adverse effects are identified.

What is a nonproject action?

A nonproject action is an agency decision on policies, plans, or programs (WAC 197-11-704).

The proposed action in this nonproject EIS is a decision by the Seattle City Council on a Master Parks Plan for waterfront spaces west of Alaskan Way and from Waterfront Park to Piers 62/63. Projects eventually built according to the plan will require a project-level environmental review for SEPA compliance.

What is the proposal?

Seattle Parks and Recreation (Parks) proposes the adoption of a Master Parks Plan for the Seattle Central Waterfront spaces west of Alaskan Way and from Waterfront Park north to Piers 62/63. The Master Parks Plan will be based on a preferred alternative selected from among four build alternatives for the removal and/or reconstruction of Piers 62/63 and near-term improvements to Waterfront Park and a No Action/No Build Alternative.

What is the purpose and need?

The purpose of the proposed action is to establish a Master Parks Plan that addresses deficiencies in existing park facilities, poor nearshore habitat conditions along the project shoreline, and accommodates future Seattle Aquarium expansion.

Master planning activities for Parks' properties on the Seattle Central Waterfront began in 2005 in response to City Council direction to explore options for replacing Piers 62/63, which are in disrepair and unable to support major events as they had in the past. Along with this initial purpose, the planning is

intended to take advantage of several opportunities resulting from other waterfront projects, including the Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement Project, the waterfront concept planning by the Seattle Department of Planning and Development (DPD), and Water Resource Inventory Area 9 (WRIA 9 – Green River/Duwamish Watershed) salmon recovery aquatic habitat restoration efforts. These issues are discussed in greater detail below. Options for the lid covering the proposed SR 99 tunnel option were explored in the Central Waterfront Master Parks Planning Feasibility Study (MAKERS 2005), but are not addressed in this EIS because of the tunnel's uncertain time frame and the need to address waterside objectives in the short term.

Piers 62/63

Constructed nearly a century ago, Piers 62/63 suffer extensive timber superstructure deterioration and can no longer support the loading requirements of large events and heavy vehicles. A recent report (Peratrovich, Nottingham and Drage and Echelon Engineering 2004) concluded that the overall condition of Piers 62/63 was fair-poor.

The pile inspections reported that about 38 percent of the timber piles have sustained heavy damage and loss of cross-sectional area as a result of fungal decay, biological deterioration, and/or marine borer damage. Of these, over 25 percent of the piles have less than one-quarter of their cross-sectional areas remaining. These are considered destroyed.

Nearly 20 percent of the existing timber piles have sustained moderate damage from these biological hazards. Moderately affected piles have lost as much as 25 percent of their cross-sectional area. The rest of the piles (about 42 percent) exhibited minor damage or were rated as undamaged.

The report also reported that a number of areas of the superstructure (caps, stringers, and decking) were found to have sustained significant damage as a result of fungal decay. These damaged areas contributed to the condition rating of fair-poor for the superstructure, as well as the overall condition of Piers 62/63.

The deteriorated condition of the piles and superstructure has limited the use of the piers to passive activities. Events such as concerts have been discontinued, and vehicle access is limited to pickup trucks on the exterior aprons. Continued

deterioration of the piling could lead to further use restrictions in 2 to 5 years depending on the rate of decay.

Waterfront Park and Expansion of the Seattle Aquarium

At some point in the future, the Seattle Aquarium, located at Pier 59, may be expanded and Waterfront Park removed. The removal of Waterfront Park is assumed to be needed to offset an expanded area of overwater coverage associated with any future Seattle Aquarium expansion. Once Waterfront Park is demolished, there will be an opportunity for marine nearshore habitat enhancement that could potentially complement Seattle Aquarium educational programs.

There are currently public safety and structural issues at Waterfront Park that must be addressed immediately. Use of the observation towers located at each end of the pier is very limited, with access to the upper stories of the two adjoining buildings blocked. The cubical structure fountain at the north end of the park is surrounded by stairs and walls that break up the space and provide interesting spaces in which to linger; these spaces are difficult to police and often serve as a venue for illegal activities.

A recent report (Tinnea and Associates, LLC 2006) of condition inspections on Piers 57, 58, and 60 concluded that there is serious corrosion of support beams, pile failure, and deterioration of the cathodic protection system, particularly with respect to the north apron of Pier 57 and Pier 58. Over one-half of the piles inspected at the City-owned Pier 57 north apron were found to be at or below 50 percent sound wood remaining, and over one-quarter of the piles were found to bear no load at all. The report concluded that 90 piles currently require replacement to maintain operability of the north apron of Pier 57 and that an additional 60 piles may require replacement in the next 5 years. Alternatively, the north apron could be demolished with or without replacement, according to the report. The north apron is currently restricted from use by vehicles and represents an ongoing seismic risk.

Pier 58 inspections of timber piles indicated a satisfactory condition with less than 11 percent of the piles to be at or below 50 percent sound wood remaining, and less than 1 percent of the piles to have no sound wood remaining. The north and south terraces of Pier 58 are supported, however, by concrete-filled steel piles (Monotubes). Within the upper tidal/splash zone, the coating on those piles is absent and the

steel has rusted entirely through, according to the inspection report. Only non-reinforced concrete remains to support the structures. The inspection showed that 78 percent of these steel piles had only 25 percent of their cross-sectional area remaining and 22 percent had only 50 percent remaining. In addition, corrosion damage was observed in H-piles that support the eastern edge of Pier 58. The H-pile survey reported that 83 percent of the H-piles had 25 percent of their cross-sectional area remaining with 17 percent having 75 percent of their cross-sectional area remaining or more.

The report recommends near-term restoration efforts to correct section loss to the steel piles, recoating of the H-piles above mean tide level, and replacement of the cathodic protection system. The report notes that the next biennium (2009 to 2010) represents a decision point on Pier 58 for a program of pile replacement and strengthening and continued inspection surveys of these structures. Maintenance deferral will lead to further load restrictions and continued seismic risk of partial or total collapse.

Marine Nearshore Habitat

The need to replace the Alaskan Way Seawall, along with potential future improvements for the Seattle Aquarium and structural issues associated with Piers 62/63, has created a unique opportunity to pursue marine nearshore habitat enhancement. The federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing of multiple stocks of Puget Sound salmonids, along with local recovery planning efforts by WRIA 9 and Shared Strategy for Puget Sound, have highlighted the need for and potential benefits of providing shallow intertidal habitats along the Central Waterfront. This type of habitat is relatively scarce in Elliott Bay as a result of dredging and filling for navigation and commercial/industrial land uses. Furthermore, the Seattle City Council's desire to support marine nearshore habitat enhancement, described in Council Resolution 30664, lists environmental sustainability as one of the seven framework principles for waterfront planning.

What other objectives are being addressed?

The proposal evaluated in this nonproject EIS is derived from the *Seattle Central Waterfront Park Planning Feasibility Study* (MAKERS 2005), which collectively evaluated potential options for Piers 62/63, Waterfront Park, and other properties east of

Alaskan Way in the context of opportunities associated with the SR 99/Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement and related planning efforts in the Central Waterfront.

Although originally initiated because of the need to replace Piers 62/63, the *Park Planning Feasibility Study* coordinated the planning and design efforts for Piers 62/63 with opportunities created by the SR 99 tunnel lid alternative, as well as other planning efforts taking place along other portions of the waterfront. Because of the uncertainties related to whether or not a tunnel will be built and the immediate need to address structural issues associated with Piers 62/63, Parks is focusing this EIS on the water side of Alaskan Way. Accordingly, the objective of the proposal is to establish a plan for future implementation in the context of several other planning efforts that provide opportunities to invigorate Seattle's Central Waterfront.

What other planning efforts are underway that affect the Seattle Central Waterfront?

- SR 99/Alaskan Way Viaduct and Seawall Replacement
- Seattle's Central Waterfront Concept Plan
- Seattle Aquarium Expansion Project
- Seattle Ferry Terminal Project
- Olympic Sculpture Park
- WRIA 9 Salmon Habitat Plan

More details about each of these projects and planning efforts can be found in the *Seattle Central Waterfront Park Planning Feasibility Study* (MAKERS 2005).

How have the public and agencies been involved in developing the proposal?

Public and agency involvement was an integral part of the *Seattle Central Waterfront Park Planning Feasibility Study* (MAKERS 2005), which initiated Parks' Central Waterfront planning and through which the project alternatives were formulated. The following diagram illustrates which agencies and individuals have been directly involved in each phase of this effort. Additionally, this project draws heavily from the extensive public involvement of Seattle DPD's 2-year waterfront planning effort in 2003 and 2004. From April to October 2005, the planning team for the Feasibility Study consulted with numerous agencies and groups interested in waterfront planning. Figure 1-1 identifies the entities consulted, the approximate time, and the form of input.

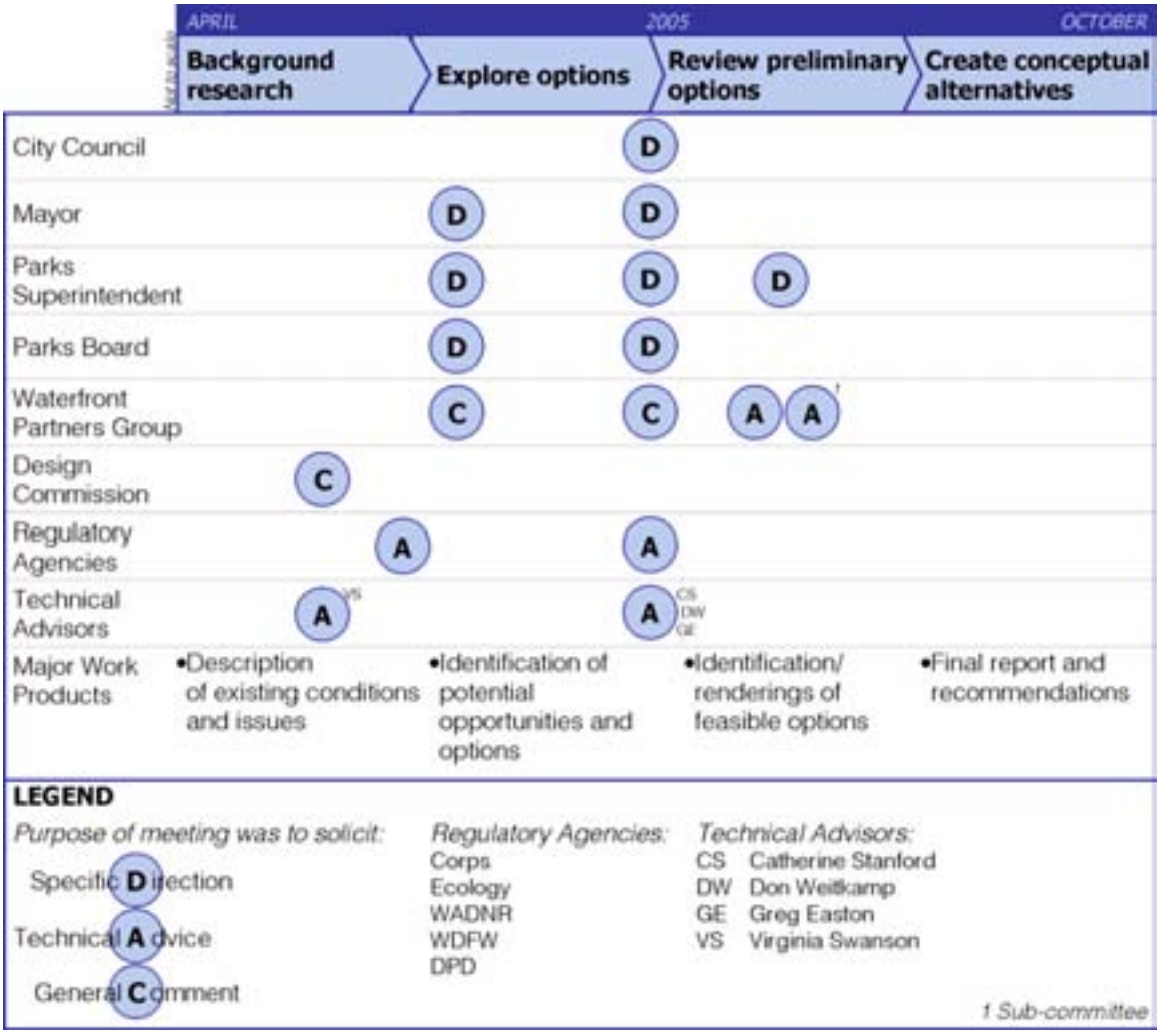

Figure 1-1. Public and Agency Involvement in the Process

As required by SEPA, scoping for the EIS was conducted to provide an opportunity for public and agency input on alternatives and environmental issues that should be addressed in the EIS. Parks issued a Determination of Significance and Request for Comments on the scope of the EIS in January 2006. A public scoping meeting was conducted on February 2, 2006 at the Parks Board Room at Denny Park. Comment letters from four parties were received and considered in preparing the EIS.

Following the public and agency review of the Draft EIS, including a public hearing, this Final EIS was prepared. Additional opportunities for public comment on the proposed action will occur during the Parks Board Recommendation/City Council adoption process.

What are the alternatives?

The alternatives addressed in this EIS are summarized below. Conceptual drawings for each of the alternatives are included in Chapter 2.

No Action/No Build Alternative – The No Action/No Build Alternative would do nothing to Piers 62/63 and Waterfront Park until demolition became necessary. No habitat enhancements would be constructed.

Rebuild/Preservation Alternative – The Rebuild/Preservation Alternative would rebuild Piers 62/63 as a similar structure in the same location but set away approximately 50 feet from the shoreline. Habitat would be enhanced along the shoreline from the northern edge of Pier 60 to the southern edge of the submerged Virginia Street right-of-way. As in all of the build alternatives, fill would be a mix of sand, gravel, and cobbles. Waterfront Park would be preserved with various near-term improvements until it is replaced with a habitat enhancement associated with a future Seattle Aquarium expansion.

Aqua Link Alternative – The Aqua Link Alternative would rebuild Piers 62/63 as a smaller structure closer to the Seattle Aquarium. It would also build a new deck connecting Piers 59 and 57. Waterfront Park and Pier 60 would be demolished as part of the Seattle Aquarium's expansion. Habitat would be enhanced along the shoreline, except underneath the expanded Seattle Aquarium, including an accessible beach from the northern edge of Pier 60 to the southern edge of the submerged Virginia Street right-of-way.

Connector Alternative – The Connector Alternative would rebuild Piers 62/63 as a similar structure in the same location but set away from the shoreline. It would also build a slender footbridge and deck connecting to the Seattle Aquarium. Waterfront Park and Pier 60 would be demolished as part of the Seattle Aquarium's expansion. Habitat would be enhanced along the shoreline, except underneath the expanded Seattle Aquarium, including an accessible beach between the new pier (Piers 62/63 replacement) and the northern edge of Pier 60.

Multi-Purpose Pier Alternative – The Multi-Purpose Pier Alternative would rebuild Piers 62/63 as a large open platform abutting an expanded Seattle Aquarium and set away from the shoreline. Waterfront Park and Pier 60 would be demolished

as part of the Seattle Aquarium's expansion. Except underneath the expanded Seattle Aquarium, habitat would be enhanced along the shoreline, including an accessible beach at the current Waterfront Park.

What are the environmental impacts of the alternatives?

Environmental impacts of each of the alternatives are summarized in Table 1-1 by environmental discipline. The summary table identifies operational impacts and construction impacts. In addition to potentially adverse impacts and proposed mitigation, the table identifies beneficial effects of the alternatives, some of which apply equally to all of the alternatives. The following paragraphs further highlight selected impacts and benefits to aid in comparing the alternatives. Where impacts are largely similar among the alternatives, their summaries have been combined. Impacts related to transportation and to public services and utilities have not been included in Table 1-1 because they are minor considerations at this stage of planning.

The No Action/No Build Alternative does not respond to the City Council's Principles for Waterfront Planning (City Council Resolution 30664), and thus does not meet the goals and objectives set for the plan. The alternative would result in the loss of nearly all of the accessible public open space on the Central Waterfront, including Waterfront Park, the view from which is a City-designated view protected under the City's SEPA regulation.

The demolition of Piers 62/63 and Waterfront Park under the No Action/No Build Alternative, as well as under the build alternatives, would eliminate a large quantity of creosote-treated piles and decking materials from the aquatic environment, indirectly benefiting water quality, sediment quality, and aquatic organisms. The demolition of the piers would eliminate their shading, which reduces light levels that in turn reduce the ability of marine vegetation to grow and provide food chain support. Their permanent removal would provide minor long-term benefits to the aquatic environment.

Localized, temporarily increased levels of turbidity and resuspended sediment contaminants would accompany pile removal for all of the alternatives.

The four build alternatives (Rebuild/Preservation, Aqua Link, Connector, and Multi-Purpose Pier) were formulated to offer a wide range of configurations, elements, and environmental enhancement designs. All would be consistent with the City Council's Principles for Waterfront Planning (City Council Resolution 30664).

All of the build alternatives would enhance nearshore areas that would aid juvenile salmon movements along the waterfront shoreline. Creation of intertidal nearshore habitat would involve placing fill material (sand, gravel, and cobble rock material) in the nearshore area to create shallower habitat. Creation of shallow intertidal nearshore habitats targeting salmon would convert subtidal habitat that currently is used by flatfish, rockfish, and a variety of other species. Because these subtidal habitats are relatively common in Elliott Bay and because the shallow intertidal habitat that supports juvenile salmon migration and other intertidal organisms is relatively scarce along the Seattle Central Waterfront, the impacts to the non-salmonid species would not be substantial on a bay-wide scale.

Because the Aqua Link Alternative's pier decks would be the smallest of the build alternatives, the Aqua Link Alternative would likely provide a marginally larger aquatic habitat enhancement than would be possible with the other alternatives. The Rebuild/Preservation Alternative would provide the least aquatic habitat enhancement, while the Connector and Multi-Purpose Pier Alternatives would be intermediate in their benefits to aquatic habitat.

The build alternatives would all include impacts from the installation of new piles, pier decks, and associated utilities and other improvements, such as over-water shading and noise and vibration effects associated with in-water work. Additionally, they would all include upland impacts during construction, including construction noise and interruptions in pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic along Alaskan Way.

The degree of impacts associated with the build alternatives is related mainly to the relative sizes of the pier decks that would replace Piers 62/63. However, these differences would not generate substantial differences in construction impacts, except minor differences in the duration of construction for the larger pier structures. Other distinctions among the alternatives would include small differences in the amount of over-water coverage, the number of piles, and the suitability of

the pier decks for hosting large events, such as concerts and other civic gatherings. None of the build alternatives would increase the amount of over-water coverage from what exists today. All of the build alternatives would move over-water coverage offshore to allow for light penetration in the shallowest areas, benefiting salmon migration along the shoreline.

All of the alternatives involve removal of Piers 62/63 and the artworks that are located in the fencing that surrounds it. Mitigation will be needed to address the impact of this removal. Also, removal or relocation of artworks at Waterfront Park (the fountain and the statue) will need to be addressed consistent with City policy.

Impacts from the build alternatives on public services and utilities and on the transportation system would be minimal. Contacts with emergency services and utilities would be made during design and construction to ensure that construction activities would be coordinated. Provisions for utilities, such as potable water and electricity, would be made during the design phase. No substantial impacts to public services and utilities would be expected during construction and operation of the build alternatives.

Construction would have temporary impacts on traffic and pedestrians along Alaskan Way. Traffic management planning would be done during the design phase to address access and circulation issues in the vicinity of project construction for the build alternatives.

*Table 1-1. Summary of Environmental Impacts and Mitigation**

Alternative	Operational Impacts	Construction Impacts	Proposed Mitigation	Project Benefits
Land Use and Consistency with Plans and Policies				
No Action/No Build	Removes key waterfront amenity Not consistent with Waterfront Concept Plan or City Council Principles for Waterfront Planning	None	None	Least noise associated with demolition and construction
Rebuild/Preservation	None	1- to 2-year in-water construction (Phase 1)	None	None
Aqua Link	None	2 years in-water construction (Phase 1) 4 years in-water construction (Phase 2)	None	Moves public space closer to the Seattle Aquarium Increases attractions and public space connectivity Provides public space off-shore from Waterfront Park site
Connector	None	Same as Aqua Link	None	Provides some public space near the Seattle Aquarium Increases attractions and

Alternative	Operational Impacts	Construction Impacts	Proposed Mitigation	Project Benefits
				public space connectivity
Multi-Purpose Pier	Potential noise incompatibility with Aquarium exhibits	Same as Aqua Link	None	Provides the largest multi-use deck Increases attractions and public space connectivity Moves events closer to the Seattle Aquarium Provides use of pier for Aquarium activities
Parks and Recreation				
No Action/No Build	Removes opportunities for most types of recreation	None	None	None
Rebuild/Preservation	None	None	None	Would support most possible future uses
Aqua Link	Would constrain larger temporary events	None	None	Would create a new walkway along the Outer Harbor Line Would provide potential additional space for events at the Seattle Aquarium

Alternative	Operational Impacts	Construction Impacts	Proposed Mitigation	Project Benefits
				Would support most possible future uses
Connector	Same as Aqua Link	None	None	Would create a new walkway along the Outer Harbor Line Would provide potential additional space for events at the Seattle Aquarium Would support most possible future uses
Multi-Purpose Pier	None	None	None	Would provide potential additional space for Seattle Aquarium events Would support most possible future uses
Cultural/Historic Resources				
No Action/No Build	None	Demolition of Waterfront Park would occur adjacent to Pier 59, which is a Seattle Landmark and included in a designated Historic Character Area	None are proposed	

Alternative	Operational Impacts	Construction Impacts	Proposed Mitigation	Project Benefits
		that is also eligible for the National Register. However, its removal would not likely affect characteristics that make these resources historic		
Rebuild/Preservation, Aqua Link, Connector, Multi-Purpose Pier	Except for the Rebuild/Preservation Alternative, the build alternatives would provide new pier structures adjacent to and in contact with Pier 59. These would alter the setting of Pier 59, but would not alter the historic features of Pier 59 that are protected	The build alternatives would involve removal of Waterfront Park as described for the No Action/No Build Alternative	None are proposed	
Visual				
No Action/No Build	Removes places for people to enjoy views Removes amenities at the park	Continuation of view blocking about 6 months Over the short term, visual quality of Piers 62/63 and Waterfront Park will decline until they are demolished	Demolish structures as soon as they are unusable	None

Alternative	Operational Impacts	Construction Impacts	Proposed Mitigation	Project Benefits
Rebuild/Preservation	None	1- to 2-year view blockage due to construction	None	Maintains status quo
Aqua Link	Removes amenities associated with Waterfront Park but rebuilds them waterward	2-year view blockage due to construction (Phase 1)	None	Improves viewing opportunities along western side of the new decks
Connector	Removes Waterfront Park amenities Adds signature bridge that will affect views	Same as Aqua Link	None	The bridge would offer unique views and could be a signature structure
Multi-Purpose Pier	Temporary structures on the deck could obscure views, depending on size and location	Same as Aqua Link	None	Would allow perimeter public movement during events
Plants and Animals				
No Action/No Build	No adverse impacts to plants and animals in the marine environment because no new construction of over-water piers	Localized, temporary increases in turbidity and resuspension of contaminants in sediments from pile removal	Use of best management practices (BMPs) to limit turbidity and exposure to contaminated sediments and piles	Long-term reduction in shading from overwater structures and benefits to aquatic environment from removal of creosote-treated piles and decking
Rebuild/Preservation	Ongoing shading impacts similar in extent	Demolition impacts same as No Action/No Build	Use of BMPs for demolition and installation	Benefits to the aquatic environment from removal

Alternative	Operational Impacts	Construction Impacts	Proposed Mitigation	Project Benefits
	to the existing Piers 62/63	Alternative Noise and vibration from pile installation could affect fish in the vicinity of impact pile driving	of new piles, pier superstructure, and habitat enhancement Use bubble curtains to minimize sound impacts during pile installation, if impact hammers used in driving piles	of creosote-treated piles and decking Reduces nearshore over-water coverage and shading, thereby enhancing light penetration to the shallower waters used by juvenile salmon Reduces shading, thereby increasing light penetration to support aquatic vegetation Benefits to juvenile salmonids from creation of shallow intertidal migration corridor and enhanced habitat Increases habitat diversity in Central Waterfront area Buries areas of potential sediment contamination
Aqua Link	Smaller area of over-water shading impact	Similar demolition impacts as No Action/No Build and	Same as Rebuild/Preservation	Same as Rebuild/Preservation

Alternative	Operational Impacts	Construction Impacts	Proposed Mitigation	Project Benefits
	from smaller deck surface than the other build alternatives	other build alternatives Similar construction impacts from pile installation as for Rebuild/Preservation and other build alternatives; however, fewer piles would be installed Conversion of relatively common bay-wide subtidal habitat used by flatfish and rockfish to relatively scarce shallow intertidal habitat	Alternative	Alternative, except largest potential area of intertidal habitat enhancement of the build alternatives
Connector	Slightly smaller over-water shading impact than the Multi-Purpose Pier Alternative	Similar demolition and construction impacts to Aqua Link and other build alternatives	Same as Rebuild/Preservation Alternative	Same as for Rebuild/Preservation Alternative Provides larger potential area of habitat enhancement than the Rebuild/Preservation Alternative, but slightly smaller than for the Aqua Link Alternative
Multi-Purpose Pier	Largest amount of over-water shading impact	Similar demolition and construction impacts to	Same as Rebuild/Preservation	Same as for Rebuild/Preservation

Alternative	Operational Impacts	Construction Impacts	Proposed Mitigation	Project Benefits
		Aqua Link and other build alternatives	Alternative	Alternative Provides larger potential area of habitat enhancement than the Rebuild/Preservation Alternative, but slightly smaller than for the Aqua Link Alternative
Water/Earth				
No Action/No Build	None	Localized, temporary increases in turbidity and resuspension of contaminants in sediments during pile removal No coverage of existing sediment contamination	Use of BMPs to minimize short-term water quality impacts	Reduction of over-water cover would promote aquatic vegetation growth, which may aid in reducing general turbidity in nearshore area
Rebuild/Preservation, Aqua Link, Connector, and Multi-Purpose Pier	Small risk of spills of hazardous/toxic materials from maintenance or other service vehicles operating on the pier deck	Localized, temporary increases in turbidity and resuspension of contaminants in sediments during pile removal and installation Risk of spills from	Use of BMPs to minimize short-term water quality impacts	Long-term benefits to sediment quality from removal of creosote-treated piles and decking from the aquatic environment Long-term isolation of

Alternative	Operational Impacts	Construction Impacts	Proposed Mitigation	Project Benefits
		construction equipment operating over water		contaminated sediments by covering with clean sand, gravel, and cobble materials as part of the habitat enhancement. Differences among the alternatives due to the differences in the areas of potential habitat enhancement

*Refer to Chapter 2 for figures showing the alternative concepts

Are there significant areas of controversy and issues to be resolved?

No significant areas of controversy have been identified. However, during the preparation of the *Seattle Central Waterfront Parks Planning Feasibility Study (MAKERS 2005)* and this EIS, the following issues arose for which there was not sufficient information to resolve or analyze completely.

Washington State Department of Natural Resources leasing policies relative to filling portions of the nearshore for environmental enhancement. Washington State, through the Washington Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), owns and manages most of the aquatic lands underlying the project area.

The Rebuild/Preservation, Aqua Link, Connector, and Multi-Purpose Pier Alternatives include some filling of the harbor area to enhance aquatic habitat. Since this filling might (but would not necessarily) restrict moorage and navigation, there is an issue that such habitat enhancements may conflict with WDNR leasing policies for harbor areas. Informal conversations with WDNR staff indicate that alterations that create habitat improvements would be supported in principle by WDNR, but that restrictions to navigation and moorage capability must be carefully reviewed. Structures, improvements, or fill whose primary purpose is to provide enhanced habitat within a designated harbor area is considered an interim use by WDNR unless this designation is changed. Placement of fill where the primary purpose is to cap contaminated sediments has been allowed by WDNR within state harbor areas. Changing the harbor designation is another option that could be considered to accommodate the habitat enhancements on a permanent basis.

Further clarification of WDNR's position regarding habitat enhancement in harbor areas is necessary to determine whether or not WDNR, as land owner, would allow the beach and protected intertidal habitat enhancements envisioned in the Rebuild/Preservation, Aqua Link, Connector, and Multi-Purpose Pier Alternatives.

Condition of sediments in the project area. WDNR is concerned that sediments within the project area may not be in compliance with the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) Sediment Management Standards (WAC 173-204). As part of any habitat enhancement, the City would explore opportunities to partner with WDNR, as the manager of State-owned aquatic lands, to integrate components that will address these concerns. Additional investigations during the project-level design and environmental review of contaminant levels in sediments would be needed to determine an appropriate course of action.

Transfer of over-water coverage. Environmental regulations and policies virtually prohibit new over-water coverage for non-water-dependent uses. Acknowledging that the relocation of over-water construction, whether on the subject parcel or elsewhere, carries with it a host of environmental permitting hurdles, the build alternatives have the following reductions in over-water coverage, based on the removal of the existing Piers 62/63 and the construction of the Phase 1 structures for each alternative:

- Rebuild/Preservation Alternative – 0 square feet (sq. ft.)
- Aqua Link Alternative – 8,642 sq. ft.
- Connector Alternative – 239 sq. ft.
- Multi-Purpose Pier Alternative – 0 sq. ft.

As conceived, none of the build alternatives would increase over-water coverage. Two would maintain the same over-water coverage in Phase 1 and two would decrease it. All would move or remove a substantial portion of the over-water coverage from the nearshore area.

Seattle DPD's Draft Waterfront Concept Plan (Seattle DPD 2005) notes areas on the waterfront where additional small public spaces, such as viewing platforms over the water, could be provided. This increase in over-water coverage could be offset by a reduction in over-water coverage elsewhere on the waterfront. Conceivably, over-water space reductions noted above for the Aqua Link and Connector Alternatives could be transferred to another section of the waterfront to be used for a viewing platform, sitting area, etc., without increasing the overall coverage in the Central Waterfront. To achieve such a transfer, the proposals might need to be developed and

permitted under a concurrent or combined project-level environmental review and permitting process.

The Multi-Purpose Pier and the Rebuild/Preservation Alternatives, as currently laid out, have no transferable space because they assume using the maximum amount of space for a civic space for large groups and events. However, this could change once Parks receives input from the resource agencies, a final decision is reached, and a design is developed. The amount of over-water coverage will be considered in developing a preferred alternative and could vary from the amounts listed above.

The future of the Seattle Aquarium. Nearly a decade ago, Seattle Aquarium staff identified a need for an expanded facility and prepared *The Central Waterfront Master Plan, Portal to the Pacific* (Parks 1994), which the City Council adopted in 1997. This plan, which envisioned a new aquarium at the location of Piers 62/63, was subsequently modified to focus on keeping the Aquarium at Pier 59. The revised plan was approved by the City Council in 2004. While the revised plan suggests a large, elliptical, "doughnut" shaped structure surrounding the current Pier 59 facility, the plans were developed to a conceptual level only and there is no actual design or timetable for any action to move this project forward. Because the Seattle Aquarium is a centerpiece of Parks' Central Waterfront facilities, the uncertainty regarding design and timing of its expansion complicates the planning of the other elements.

Appearance, maintenance, and effectiveness of the beach and enhanced intertidal habitats. Because this project is located in a high priority location for salmon recovery within the WRIA 9 nearshore, it will be important to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed habitat improvements. The proposed primary habitat enhancement features (creating shallow water habitat and opening a nearshore corridor along the seawall with less overwater structure) in all alternatives, except the No Action Alternative, address the habitat needs that scientific investigations have indicated will improve habitat quality for juvenile salmon and other aquatic resources that support them. It is an excellent opportunity to investigate the degree of habitat quality improvements and applicability of the restoration design to other areas around Elliott Bay and Puget Sound. For maintenance, the project design of the selected alternative will

need to include predictive modeling of how long beach materials can be expected to stay onsite. Smaller material is carried away sooner than larger material, but has higher value for juvenile salmon habitat. Some intertidal beach maintenance to add beach materials is anticipated every 5 to 10 years. Maintenance to remove washed up anthropogenic debris, such as plastic and creosote-treated wood, would likely be needed one or more times each year. Untreated wood washed on shore could be left in place.

The relative importance of different recreational features. The alternatives were designed to provide a spectrum of recreational features, ranging from a relatively large event or gathering space, to a connected esplanade/bridge offering a unique experience of the water, to a beach and smaller more intimate spaces. It is not clear which combination of these uses best fits the public's priorities.

Schedule and design of the Alaskan Way Seawall reconstruction. The seawall along the Central Waterfront is scheduled for replacement and is currently in design. Neither the final design nor the schedule is known for certain. The ultimate design and timing of the seawall construction could affect the phasing and design of this project, especially the identified habitat enhancements.

What are the next steps?

Based on the EIS analysis and public and agency comments on the Draft EIS, Parks staff recommends that an updated version of the Multi-Purpose Pier Alternative be selected as the preferred Master Plan alternative. The preferred alternative is judged to be most consistent with the project objectives, City Council and mayoral direction, and public comment. Although the EIS includes conceptual drawings of the alternatives, the eventual locations and shapes of overwater structures and habitat enhancements may be different from those shown in the drawings. The preferred alternative's characteristics will be more fully described in programmatic terms.

Parks' recommendation, represented by the Multi-Purpose Pier alternative, consists of the following features:

- The demolition of Piers 62/63 and their replacement with a new pier that would:

- Be located in proximity to, and connected to, the north side of the Seattle Aquarium, providing access from the end of Pier 59 to the north
- Allow for Seattle Aquarium expansion as envisioned in the Seattle Aquarium Master Plan (Parks 2004)
- Accommodate events for up to 4,000 people, while also providing public access along the perimeter, moorage, and other unprogrammed space
- Feature an approximately 50-foot offset from the shoreline with access to the pier by pedestrian and vehicular ramps, as needed, thereby increasing light within nearshore habitats

- Improved nearshore habitat enhancements, including habitat bench/migration corridor, extended foreshore, and foreshore/backshore gravel beach types. Public viewing and interpretation of the resulting enhancements is envisioned.
- Near-term improvements to Waterfront Park addressing structural, functional, and public safety issues.
- Future demolition of Waterfront Park structures and replacement with future expanded Seattle Aquarium structures and nearshore habitat enhancement.

The Mayor will review the Parks' recommendation and pass that recommendation or make his own recommendation for adoption by the City Council. The process for City Council adoption of a Master Parks Plan will involve an opportunity for public comment.

Additional future opportunities for public involvement will occur during project design and environmental review under SEPA. A variety of city, state, and federal permits and approvals will be required for construction of any eventual project. Permits, such as the Shoreline permit and Section 404 permit, include opportunities for public comment.

When will the adopted Master Parks Plan be implemented?

Once the Master Parks Plan is adopted, implementation will be dependent upon the alternative chosen and the availability of funding. Also, it will need to be coordinated with other

construction activities, such as the seawall replacement and the Alaskan Way Viaduct project. When these will occur is uncertain.